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BOARD TO DELAY FINAL ACTION ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Idaho State Board of Education President Kurt Liebich today announced the Board will delay action on a proposed policy defining the terms “diversity,” “equity” and “inclusion” as applied to higher education, when it meets later this month.

“When I became Board president last spring, I said we have to find a way to objectively measure student satisfaction on our public campuses,” Liebich said.

“Before we continue consideration of a new policy, we are going to conduct a campus climate survey of students later this fall. It will be a scientific survey conducted by the Board office and independent of the institutions. We should have results back after the first of the year.”

“To date, we have received about 65 emails from folks commenting on the proposed policy and other issues such as “social justice” and “critical race theory.” We heard the legislature’s concerns last spring and we take them seriously. But we need objective data to fully understand the scope and magnitude of the issues if there are any. We also would like further input from our institutions. That way we can effectively address next steps through policy action.

“The COVID-19 Delta variant surge and its impact on public education at all levels is the Board’s top priority. Last spring, we thought the pandemic would soon be behind us. Instead, it is getting worse and crippling the state’s entire hospital system. Until we have a better grasp of how this will ultimately affect our ability to keep schools open, other important but less urgent matters will be deferred.”

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